(a) whether India and France have decided to improve the economic ties between the two countries and to diversify the on going collaborations and joint ventures through transfer of technology;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any talks have been held in this regard between the two countries; and

(d) if so, the details and outcome thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) to (d). The meetings of the Indo-French Joint Business Council and Indo-French Joint Committee held in New Delhi in October 1991 and Paris in November 1991 respectively have identified areas such as computer software, food processing, telecommunications, pollution control, solar energy and agro industry amongst others for enhanced Indo-French economic collaboration. This was re-emphasised by the Prime Minister of India and the French president during their talks in Paris in November, 1991.

Export Potential of Andhra Pradesh

4860. SHRI K.V.R. CHOWDARY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Andhra Pradesh has a great potential for export of Tobacco, Vegetables, Yarn and ready-made garments; and

(b) if so, the steps taken or proposed to be taken by the Government to encourage export of the above items from that State?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI SALMAN KHURSHEED): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Tobacco Board, APEDA, TEXPROCIL and the AEPC have been set up, inter alia, to promote exports of tobacco, vegetables, yarn and ready-made garments respectively. Action system has been introduced through the Tobacco Board.

A package of trade policy measures have been introduced aimed at strengthening export incentives, eliminating substantial volume of import licensing and to encourage exports. These measures also applies to exports from the State of Andhra Pradesh. The new EXIM scrips will facilitate access to certain categories of imports of raw materials, components and spares. The system of advance licensing as an instrument of export promotion has also been strengthened. Government has decided to allow established exporters to open foreign currency accounts in approved banks and allow exporters to raise external credits, pay for export related imports from such accounts and credit export proceeds to such accounts. The exchange rate adjustments will a also benefit exporters of those items.

Construction of Roads/Bridges in Andhra Pradesh

4861. SHRI G.M.C. BALAYOGI: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) the details of proposals sent by the Government of Andhra Pradesh for construction of roads/bridges in the State with Central assistance;

(b) the action taken by the Union Government thereon; and

(c) the present status of the proposals?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) a statement is enclosed.